

# ROLLIN'

**Created by John N. Druska**



*“If his forces are united, separate them.”*

*- Sun Tzu, The Art of War*

ROLLIN'

"Pilot"

a/k/a

"General Malaise"

Written By

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Shooting Draft V2

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1 BLACK. 1

The cacophonous BOOM & TUMBLE of a bowling ball colliding with pins echoes in the void.

FADE IN:

2 P.O.V. - NIGHT 2

An overhead SCORING MONITOR displays a CARTOON: an anthropomorphic bowling pin on a surf board, waiving a finger with admonishing "not-so-fast" implications.

3 INT. CIRCLE LANES - NIGHT 3

DARREN CHIBON, 33, be-stubbled, worn-out looking, but perhaps at one time borderline handsome, stares up at the monitor, then down the length of the bowling lane before him: A 1-7-10 SPLIT STARES BACK. Not impossible to salvage, but not easy.

The GRAPHICS on the monitor change to an illustrated MAP of the pins left standing, with a large red arrow indicating where Darren's next ball should make contact.

In the seating area behind him, three LANKY 20-something HIPSTERS - JOE, ANNACECILIA and ANFERNEE - overzealously cheer him on.

ANNACECILIA

It's okay Darren, you got this!

ANFERNEE

Yeah D-Bones! Yeah D-Money!

JOE

C'mon buddy! We only need two pins!

The overhead monitor shows the line on the BOWLING MATCH thus far: "The Gutter Snapes" are down to their last ball, trailing by 1 pin to "Whole Foods:" 912 to 913.

The ball return belches out Darren's bowling ball. With purpose, he slides his fingers into the holes, cradling the smooth, butterscotch boulder as he steps into his stance. He approaches the foul line, rears back and ROLLS HIS BALL.

Darren, his teammates, the WHOLE FOODS CREW, and even some random true SPECTATORS watch the ball progress towards its destiny. Time crawls.

WHUMP. Missing all three of the pins it could have hit, the ball slams heavily into the backstop curtain of the lane.

The Whole Foods crew CELEBRATES their victory. The Gutter Snaps recoil in defeat. Darren stares stoically at the pins, as the automatic pin-setter machine SWEEPS them away. Finally, Darren steps away and joins his teammates.

JOE (CONT'D)

Damn, sorry Darren.

DARREN

Ah, it's okay. There's a lot of  
Glendale Wednesday Twilight Summer  
Mixed League teams who would love to  
have come in Second Place.

ANNACECILIA

That's the spirit, D-Bones.

Darren smiles reassuringly and steps away, off the hardwood area of the lanes, onto the carpeted LEISURE AREA of the bowling alley: a front desk, arcade games, vending machines, etc. Further tucked away: a BAR, darts, pool.

A TABLE is set up with half-assed trophies and even more half-assed snacks; a "LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP" BANNER hangs above.

Suddenly ENRAGED, BELLOWING like a Viking Berserker, Darren WHIPS his bowling bag into the glass façade of a vending machine, SHATTERING IT.

CUT TO-

TITLE CARD:

ROLLIN'

4 EXT. CIRCLE LANES PARKING LOT - NIGHTTIME - LATER

4

Two POLICE CARS idle out front of the classic bowling alley, their red and blue lights flooding the parking lot in disorienting pulses. Darren, humbled, addresses his teammates:

DARREN

I let you down. And you saw me at my  
weakest. And, talk is cheap,  
but,...I'll never leave a one-seven-  
ten split standing again.

ANNACECILIA

That's it?

DARREN

What do you mean, "that's it?"  
Admitting that I didn't bowl good -  
that's a not meaningful, emotionally  
raw thing to you?

ANFERNEE

Not really, no.

DARREN

Well then feel free to chime in any  
time, because all of you left enough  
open frames in there to start a  
fucking portrait studio.

JOE

We were hoping you would apologize for  
that incident in there.

DARREN

Incident? That wasn't an incident.

JOE

Should I say, "altercation?"

DARREN

How about "small misunderstanding that  
wasn't Darren's fault?" Look, I know  
you're all upset about losing Summer  
League-

ANFERNEE

No, you are! We're upset because you  
got us detained by the police!

ANNACECILIA

Yeah, they gave us all sobriety tests,  
and I'm a little concerned that you  
were able to pass yours.

DARREN

Oldest trick in the book - listen,  
this is the league life, and sometimes  
it gets hard! If you want to show up  
and roll once a week and can't handle  
fighting for your honor from time to  
time, then maybe this isn't the right  
fit for you!

ANNACECILIA

I'm glad you finally noticed.

A tense beat. Suddenly Darren lightens up.

DARREN  
Moving forward, I already paid our  
fees for Fall League, so when can you  
guys pay me back? Wanna take me out to  
dinner right now?

A COP with a MUSTACHE approaches.

MUSTACHE COP  
Mister Chibben?

DARREN  
"Chy-bonn," yes.

MUSTACHE COP  
Okay, we've talked with your opponents  
and the bowling alley staff, and we're  
going to let you off with a warning.

DARREN  
(to the Lanky Hipsters)  
See? Everybody else gets it: that's  
just how I am when I roll.

The Lanky Hipsters, fed up and rolling their eyes, disband.

MUSTACHE COP  
Yeah, several witnesses suggested  
you're dealing with untreated mental  
or emotional disorders, so to press  
charges felt "cruel."

DARREN  
I'll take it.

The Mustache Cop leaves. Darren jogs after Joe.

DARREN (CONT'D)  
Hey man, I just want to make sure  
everyone is on board for Fall League.  
Nobody seems as excited about practice  
or O.T.A.s as me.

JOE  
Uh...yeah dude. We're game.

DARREN  
Okay. Because, we lost today, and no  
one has paid me back for Fall dues,  
and no one else really threw a punch  
in there on my behalf...

JOE  
Yeah, we're down.

DARREN

- Basic bowling teammate stuff. Not cooperating with the police would have been nice.

JOE

I assure you, we're cool. We're in for Fall League. I promise.

Joe eagerly rushes to get into his car, starting it and DRIVING OFF, tires squealing. Darren calls after him.

DARREN

Okay great, bro! We got weight training at my place Monday!

Darren breathes a sigh of relief and sparks a cigarette. His phone CHIRPS and he withdraws it:

5 P.O.V. DARREN - A TEXT MESSAGE - NIGHT 5

FROM: GLASSES BOWLING GUY

You're off the team, Darren.

6 BACK TO SCENE - NIGHT 6

DARREN

AH, SHIT ON MY FACE!

7 EXT. SUBURBAN BACK YARD - AFTERNOON - DAYS LATER 7

Darren stands with CHRIS JENSEN, 33, handsome, fit, blonde. Chris hoses down a flowerbed in his picturesque yard: a townhouse on one side, a child's swing set in one corner, various CHILDREN scurrying around happily.

CHRIS

So, they shitcanned ya, who cares? How'd you even get involved with those kids?

DARREN

THEY recruited ME! And then they turn around and tell the cops I'm mentally ill. If anything, it's a general malaise.

CHRIS

So? You're good at rollin'. Somebody else will pick you up.

DARREN

Nah man. I'm putting a crew together.  
And I need you.

CHRIS

A crew, huh? Who's on this crew?

DARREN

Me.

CHRIS

Pssh. You suck.

DARREN

You just said I was good!

CHRIS

Yeah, but you're not an anchor. You're not a weapon. I'm better than you and I haven't rolled in a couple years. I haven't even done a league since I was twenty-eight.

DARREN

And I bet that eats you up inside. You miss the thrills of the alley. The victories, the admiration, those fuckin' pizza puffs. Your legacy is in that place.

CHRIS

Didn't somebody get a fatal MRSA infection from a house ball a couple years ago?

DARREN

No, it was black mold in the bathroom and no one died from it...directly.

Chris abandons his hose and grabs a big, stuffed PLASTIC TRASH BAG. He walks through his yard and out to his front driveway as Darren follows him.

8

EXT. CHRIS'S FRONT DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

8

CHRIS

Who else have you recruited?

DARREN

You're the first. The centerpiece to my master plan.

Chris puts the bag in his trash can.

CHRIS

Master plan? Dude, you can't even plan laundry day. Do you have any actual prospects? League buddies? What about The General?

DARREN

The General?! Is that a joke? Is that a real suggestion? Because homo conversion therapy is a more legit idea than that.

CHRIS

I'm just sayin,' you guys used to roll well together. Have you even asked?

DARREN

I don't need to ask because I know what the answer will be. I got a better chance at eating Beyonce's Butthole than talking The General into rollin' with me again.

CHRIS

All right, The General is a long shot, I get it. But pitch me a team, man! Make me want to join.

DARREN

You should want to join for the love of the game! Remember the old days? You'd roll a seven-hundred series, throw back a twelve-pack and bang one of the middle-aged pool sharks just because it was a Tuesday! And you're turning your back on that for this cookie-cutter, track housing, H.O.A. suburban nightmare?!

WHAM! Chris's wife JENNY JENSEN, 31, brunette, fuckin' bangin' as all hell, slams the trunk of a sick-ass DODGE MAGNUM, approaching them. She clutches a GROCERY BAG in one arm.

JENNY

Hey Babe! I nabbed you some beer and fried chicken at the store. Darren, will you stay for dinner?

DARREN

No thanks, Jenny. I'm rollin' tonight.

JENNY

I'll fix you a to-go Tupperware. Oh,  
and Chris: Stacy said the kids can  
come over to their pool tomorrow, so  
you'll have all day to yourself.  
Should I bake you some brownies? Think  
it over.

Jenny goes inside. Chris turns back to Darren. He doesn't  
gloat, but he clearly loves his life.

DARREN

You're *suffocating*.

CHRIS

I love you, man. But I don't want to  
give up a night every week to not win  
on some average team in some shitty  
beer league. Get a legit crew together  
and I'll think about being your fourth.

DARREN

Whatever, dude.

Darren walks past him towards the house.

CHRIS

Where are you going?

DARREN

I was promised fried chicken!

Chris shrugs and starts back towards the back yard. His cell  
phone DINGS and he looks to it:

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 9  | P.O.V. CHRIS - A TEXT MESSAGE - AFTERNOON                     | 9  |
|    | FROM: JENNY<br>You look hot doing yardwork!<br>Sex tonight?   |    |
| 10 | BACK TO SCENE - AFTERNOON                                     | 10 |
|    | Chris smiles a SHIT-EATING GRIN.                              |    |
| 11 | P.O.V. DARREN - A TEXT MESSAGE - LATER - NIGHT                | 11 |
|    | FROM: MARY<br>Call me back Darren.<br>I'm not fucking around. |    |

12 INT. DARREN'S CAR - NIGHT 12

Darren is parked. Depressed, he stares at his cell phone, sucking down a can of beer and ASSAULTING the fried chicken from Jenny.

13 EXT. CIRCLE LANES PARKING LOT - NIGHT 13

Darren sulks out of his car, tossing the beer can aside. He grabs his bowling bag and saunters through the lot, drunkenly MUTTERING TO HIMSELF:

DARREN

Says I'm not a weapon. I'm a weapon.  
I'm a fucking winner. I am a bowling  
GOD, and I will be respected.

14 INT. CIRCLE LANES - NIGHT 14

Darren ENTERS.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Well, if it isn't my duplicitous,  
ignoramus ex-husband.

Leaning confidently against the front desk countertop is MARY WILLERT-GREENSCHTAUFFEN, 32, full bodied, bohemian, beautiful. She wears an artsy shawl and stares daggers at Darren. A TEENAGE DESK CLERK lurks nearby.

MARY

Who also smells like dog turds.

DARREN

What the fuck do you want, Mary?

MARY

As all my voicemails and texts have indicated, I want to talk to you. And I asked myself, "in which diarrhea-infested shithole could I most likely find Darren?"

TEENAGE DESK CLERK

(butting in)

It was actually black mold...

Darren walks down to a LANE and tries to unpack his ball and shoes, but Mary shadows him.

DARREN

Well, even though you're dressed like a fake circus gypsy, you're not a fucking fortune-teller. It's Saturday night, why would I not be rollin'?

MARY

You are as predictable as a period - and twice as irritating. Which is why I'm angry, but not surprised that your alimony lapsed again.

DARREN

Christ woman. Didn't you marry into some secret Nazi stolen gold fortune or some shit? You really hurting for my four-fifteen a month?

Darren doubles back to the carpeted leisure area. Again, Mary matches him stride for stride.

MARY

It's what's legally expected of you, Darren. I'm doing you a service by not simply getting a bench warrant issued for you.

DARREN

How noble of you. What's next, you gonna wave somebody through at an intersection?

MARY

Where is your money going? I know you live in the same shitty place and drive the same shitty car.

Darren reaches the BUSTED UP VENDING MACHINE, with a cardboard "OUT OF ORDER" sign pasted to it and a black garbage bag taped over it. He sinks before remembering Mary and parrying her:

DARREN

Are those adjectives necessary? Look, this is a tough month for me, okay? I just put down league dues -

MARY

Bowling dues? That's your excuse? God, you are fucking obsessed.

DARREN

Obsessed with Glory, sure. I'm putting together a team.

(MORE)

DARREN (CONT'D)

A real murderers' row. A crew that'll make those teams The General used to run look like fuckin' bocce ball.

MARY

That's what this is about? You're still living in the shadow of "The General?" That is sad, Darren.

DARREN

It's got nothing to do with The General, that was just a barometer for comparison.

MARY

So, it's got everything to do with The General?

DARREN

Fuck The General. I'm doing this for one reason and one reason only; the purest reason: to crush some skinny Gen Zs who fired me.

MARY

Now that is noble.

DARREN

Knock it all you want, but when I win, I'll be flush, and you'll get your alimony every God damn first of the month. How does that sound?

MARY

About as likely as you finding the clitoris.

DARREN

We'll see.

MARY

Are you seriously stonewalling me here? Because even though you're already about as respected as a Sandy Hook Truther, I can still embarrass you further.

Darren chuckles, condescending:

DARREN

All right, I'll bite.

Mary turns and walks towards the front desk. Darren sees where she's going with this, and he follows.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Here? Wow, you have your head further up your ass than one of your holistic enemas. This is my house, toots. These are my people.

Around a corner comes ELMER ZYCHEK, a beer-bellied, jovial Polack, 65. He sees Mary and brightens up; they warmly hug.

ELMER

Mary, darling! So good to see you!

MARY

Hi Elmer! It's been too long!

ELMER

What brings you out here after all these years?

MARY

As usual, I'm cleaning up one of Darren's messes. Did you cash his Fall League dues check, yet?

ELMER

I tried. It bounced.

They both turn and look to Darren, who is crushed.

DARREN

Fuck me.

ELMER

Get that money to me by Monday, buddy. Or no Fall League.

Elmer smiles warmly to Mary and excuses himself. Mary, showing a flash of compassion, approaches Darren.

DARREN

I wish I was a Sandy Hook Truther. At least they're confident.

MARY

I don't need the money. I'm just trying to hold you accountable.

DARREN

I'm sick of asking you for favors.

MARY

But you were always so good at it.

Mary chuckles to try and lighten the situation. Darren stifles a sad smirk.

MARY (CONT'D)

This isn't a favor. I'm keeping a tab on my backed alimony. Just get your shit together first and then you can start paying me back. You have to figure out a way to earn money, Darren. And not by gambling on bowling.

DARREN

(raw and heartfelt)

I know. I know.

15 INT. INGLEWOOD BOWLING PARLOUR - LATER - SAME NIGHT

15

6 lanes occupy the cramped, upstairs bowling lounge - a vice den of a bygone era: cigarette smoke hangs heavy in the air. Piles of MONEY exchange hands. Games are scored by hand. The clientele is OLDER REDNECKS, GRIZZLED BLACK MEN, and other MALE NE'ER-DO-WELLS.

16 INT./EXT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

16

Darren, with his bowling bag, faking confidence, walks up the stairs towards frosted glass double doors. A casually dressed hardass, ELVIS, 30, Black, leans on a wall. As Darren passes him, Elvis follows him up the stairs.

They reach the double doors. Darren steps almost through and pushes the door ajar for Elvis.

ELVIS

Ain't no man hold a door for me.

DARREN

Oh, um. Yeah, I wasn't, I was just sorta nudging it open.

ELVIS

Oh, so what? You don't hold a door for a Black man?

DARREN

No I - I'll hold a door for a Black man. Sure.

ELVIS

Oh, so I need you to hold the door for me, huh?

(MORE)

ELVIS (CONT'D)

Like I'm some boogedy-boogedy monkey  
comin' out the jungle motherfucker  
don't even know how to use doorknobs?

Darren is SHOCKED by the implication but can't meet the challenge with words. After a moment, he stutters out:

DARREN

Are you...coming in, or...

ELVIS

I told you: ain't no man hold a door  
for me!

Darren shrugs and enters, tugging the door shut behind him. As the door closes:

ELVIS (CONT'D)

Can you believe this motherfucker  
closing a door on m-

17 INT. BOWLING PARLOUR - NIGHT

17

Darren approaches the front desk. A Black gentleman in his 60's, REGGIE, stands behind it.

REGGIE

Sorry pal. We got leagues all night.

DARREN

Yeah, I want to get in on the leagues.

REGGIE contemplates a moment.

REGGIE

Leagues are all filled up.

DARREN

C'mon man. I just want some action.

REGGIE

Take a hike, white boy.

MAN (O.S.)

Darren? Darren Chib-no?

Darren turns to see JASON CHRISTMAS, 36, a bald, handsome, happy African American bounding towards him.

DARREN

Chibon, yeah. Holy shit, Jason!

They slap five and bro-hug.

JASON

Damn man! It's been a little while, huh?

DARREN

Yeah, not since you rolled that three hundred at the Labor Day tournament a couple years ago. Where ya been?

JASON

I had to get some things in order after my divorce. Driving up to Glendale every week wasn't in the cards.

DARREN

Jeez. Cunt ex-wives, amirite?

JASON

Nah, it's all good. She's a great mother and sometimes we still fuck.

DARREN

Cool.

JASON

How about you? Man, that joint in Glendale was a dump. Where are you rollin' these days?

DARREN

Same place.

JASON

Oh. Wasn't there-

DARREN

It was black mold.

An unfortunate pause.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Y'know...I'm actually putting a crew together for Fall League. Sure could use the occasional three hundred -

JASON

Shit...didn't I just tell you the Valley sucks? Who else ya got?

Darren debates, then LIES:

DARREN

There's been some talk of The General.

JASON

...You know The General?

DARREN

"Know" The General? Shit, we rolled for years. We go way back.

JASON

Whoa. I've heard some stories. Seen a few 300 plaques on the walls at Circle Lanes, too.

DARREN

Nine of them, last I counted. And I backstopped them all.

JASON

So you're bringing The General out of retirement?

DARREN

We spoke today. Nothing's set in stone. But if I know The General, I'd say it's only a matter of time.

JASON

How about you? Have you gotten better?

DARREN

Better? I mean, yeah, I'm always getting better, I'm always chasing my highest form, but I was pretty solid to start with.

JASON

I guess you were decent.

DARREN

I'm better than decent, okay? In fact, someone referred to me just this evening as a weapon. And a winner. And a bowling GOD-

Jason gives him a curious glance, and Darren reins himself in.

DARREN (CONT'D)

The point is, I can roll, and I'd love to prove it, but I can't get any action.

JASON

(to Reggie)

C'mon Reggie. Give the guy a shot.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

I can vouch for him.

(to Darren)

You brought some cash, right?

Elvis swaggers by.

ELVIS

I'll roll this motherfucker.

DARREN

Finally figured out that door,  
dumbass?

This foolhardy antagonism SILENCES the entire hall. Elvis turns incredulously to Darren, staring him down. Darren goes rigid, terrified and barely masking his fear. He can't believe he just said that.

REGGIE

All right. Let's give 'em a lane.

(a beat, to himself)

I haven't seen a murder in a while  
anyway.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 18 | INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT  | 18 |
|    | It is the middle of the night. Chris lies awake, glancing to the nubile, taut body of Jenny, who slumbers beautifully. Chris smiles but something lies restless within him. He arises and exits the gorgeous bedroom. |    |
| 19 | INT. HALLWAY - CHRIS'S DAUGHTERS' ROOM - MOMENTS LATER  | 19 |
|    | Chris traces his fingers on a homemade SIGN peppered with glitter, hearts and unicorns, declaring "DESIREE & MADELINE'S ROOM." He smiles.   |    |
| 20 | INT. CHRIS'S NURSERY - MOMENTS LATER  | 20 |
|    | Cute as a button, Chris's INFANT SON sleeps. Chris soaks in the placidity with pride.   |    |
| 21 | INT. CHRIS'S KITCHEN - LATER  | 21 |
|    | Meandering aimlessly through his own castle, Chris finds himself opening his fridge and withdrawing a beer bottle.  |    |

- 22 INT. CHRIS'S BACK YARD - LATER 22
- He steps out into his dark yard, still and sweet in the midnight ether. He approaches his GARAGE and dramatically yanks the door open.
- 23 INT. CHRIS'S GARAGE - LATER 23
- Impeccably cleaned coolers and neatly stacked boxes fill the large room. Even this guy's storage space is perfect. Chris finds an unmarked BOX and places it on a table, sitting on a man cave sofa.
- He plugs in an old lamp and settles in, opening the box.
- He withdraws a BOWLING TROPHY. The PLAQUE reads, "Circle Lanes 2014 Spring League 1st Place Team: THE HIGH ROLLERS"
- 24 P.O.V. CHRIS - VARIOUS PHOTOGRAPHS - INTERCUT 24
- YOUNG Chris and Darren preen like cocky jerks at various bowling alleys. They routinely hold up "#1" fingers.
- His hands LINGER on ONE PHOTO: Chris, Jenny, Mary and Darren, truly happy, at a friendly couples bowling night.
- 25 BACK TO SCENE - NIGHT 25
- Chris smiles. He sifts through the box more, pulling out an old bowling GLOVE, and other smaller TROPHIES or PLAQUES: "2012 Summer League Runners-Up: B. HUSSEIN TRAVOLTA," "CHRIS JENSEN: 2016 Memorial Tournament High Series: 871."
- 26 P.O.V. CHRIS - ANOTHER PHOTO 26
- Chris and Darren, in some smoky pool hall, young, drunk and free. Chris's arm dangles around a SUPER-HOT COUGAR.
- 27 BACK TO SCENE - NIGHT 27
- A scandalous glance crosses Chris's face.
- 28 MONTAGE - CONTINUOUS - SAME NIGHT: 28

- 29 INT. INGLEWOOD BOWLING PARLOUR 29
- Darren and Elvis exchange volcanic volleys down the vintage hardwood, a heavyweight bout swelling with locomotive inertia with every leviathan thrust of spherical urethane, barreling towards a divisive, destructive decision:
- KOOSH! Elvis eyeballs a completed STRIKE, cursing the felled pins as if they are assassinated underworld rivals.
- PLUNK! Darren slinks away from a successful SPARE, sheepishly glancing around to see if anyone notices that one was luck, not grace.
- BA-DAM! Elvis leaves a TOUGH SPARE OPEN, pins still standing. He bellows angrily to the ceiling. Darren tries desperately to stifle his Schadenfreudian glee.
- Darren makes one of his trademark, stilted approaches to the foul line. Lurking in the crowd and chaos behind him, Jason watches, calm, analytical eyes flickering this way and that with the bloodlust of a Great White.
- 30 MONTAGE - CHRIS'S GARAGE 30
- Chris silently MASTURBATES. His glance dances between the COUGAR PHOTO and one of his 1st place TROPHIES.
- 31 MONTAGE - INT. INGLEWOOD BOWLING PARLOUR 31
- BOOM! Showboating slightly, Darren pumps a fist after a convincing strike. Even Elvis shows a glimmer of vulnerability as he sizes up Darren from his bench seating.
- Elvis returns from a triumphant toss, dapping and high fiving a few of his financial backers.
- Darren fucks with Elvis, plucking a HAND TOWEL off a bench right before Elvis does, wiping his hands, then dropping the towel at Elvis's feet: pure psychological warfare.
- Elvis exhibits a flourish of celebration.
- Darren and Jason merge for a dramatic high five after a sick SPARE PICK-UP from the former.
- 32 MONTAGE - CHRIS'S GARAGE 32
- Chris still SELF-GRATIFIES, although now more BOWLING MEMENTOS are spread out on the table before him. More bowling stuff than sexy pictures. It's weird.

## 33 MONTAGE - INT. INGLEWOOD BOWLING PARLOUR

33

Elvis fucks with Darren, picking up Darren's ball off the ball trough and handing it over - but not before sticking his fingers into the finger holes. Darren DEFINITELY notices, and sneers after the despicable opponent.

DOOSH! PING! CLUNK! Their ammunition assaults the oblong antagonists unabated. STRIKES, nifty SPARES, tough MISSES and even the rare accursed GUTTER BALL hammer the end of the lane backstop, as the warriors react accordingly:

Darren "shoots" a pin with an air-finger-gun; Elvis thrusts his hips sexually in celebration; Darren - beguiled - stares down a lane, questioning physics itself; Elvis slips sunglasses on theatrically; Darren grimaces in pure existential anguish; Elvis kicks the ball return, etc. etc.

## 34 MONTAGE - CHRIS'S GARAGE

34

Chris's pace furious, his inspiration spurious: he works his way up towards climax. Achieving his intended conclusion, he tilts his head back, his own BOWLING BALL WATCHING HIM from within the folds of an old BALL BAG.

## 35 INT. INGLEWOOD BOWLING PARLOUR - LATER - END MONTAGE

35

Darren, exhausted, looks on as Elvis rolls a ball, knocking down a handful of pins. Elvis yells in frustration, as the spectating GAMBLERS react with restrained satisfaction. All other action has ceased; everyone watches this match.

Jason sidles up next to Darren, speaking intimately.

JASON

All right, if he doesn't pick this up,  
he's up on you only a dozen pins or  
so. Can you pick up a dozen pins?

DARREN

Piece of cake.

JASON

Great. Don't.

DARREN

Gotcha.

Elvis throws his next ball and LEAVES ONE PIN STANDING. Again, he BELLOWS angrily; again the Gamblers react pleasantly. Darren realizes to what he just agreed.

DARREN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, what?

JASON

I need you to lose this game, which then loses the match.

DARREN

Which then loses me my fucking scrot, man! I can't lose to this guy, I have no money!

JASON

No problem. I'll cover you. Once you lose.

DARREN

But if I win, then you don't have to cover me.

JASON

Yeah, but I bet against you.

DARREN

What the fuck?!

ELVIS

Yo, are we rollin' action, or are you two writing a fuckin' thesis over there?!

Jason waives off the protest; evidently he's got enough pull here to control the pace. Back to Darren, *sotto voce*:

JASON

No one has ever mouthed off to Elvis the way you did back there. Nobody here knows you, so they think you're fucking crazy and that you're some hustler looking to score. So, no one is betting against you. Except me.

DARREN

Listen pal, I know it's been a few years, and we don't know each other too well, so let me tell you a little something about myself. I'm divorced, I'm broke, and I got a drinking problem that most of the time is the highlight of my day. The last job I had - two years ago - was selling cocaine, and not even good shit. All I have is the hardwood.

(MORE)

DARREN (CONT'D)

60 feet, 16 pounds, 10 frames at a time - what I do on the lanes defines me. And I'll never compromise my integrity. I'll never sell out my legacy. I don't got much going for me. But I got respect. For myself, and for the Game.

JASON

How much would you win?

DARREN

Five hundred. The honest way.

JASON

I've got forty-six hundred on you to lose.

A pained yet practical expression scribbles itself across Darren's malleable visage.

36 INT. CIRCLE LANES FRONT DESK - MORNING - THE NEXT DAY

36

Darren SLAPS A BIG PILE OF CASH down in front of Elmer. Jason accompanies him.

DARREN

Fall League dues.

ELMER

Great. Who's your team?

DARREN

Me and Jason Christmas, to start.

JASON

Oh, I - I don't know, man.

DARREN

What? Why did you drive me up here, then?

JASON

Because I watched you drink 16 beers *starting* at midnight.

Darren deflates. Elmer scoops up the cash.

ELMER

Get back to me on your roster, Darren. You've got some time.

DARREN

C'mon man! Don't you miss league rollin'? Are you really happy going to that speakeasy on the weekends; drinking, smoking, gambling, while your ex-wife you still fuck raises your kids nevermind that sounds dope.

JASON

Look D, you're a fun guy and you can roll pretty good. But this team you keep talking about doesn't sound like much. What's your team name?

DARREN

I'm working on that. It's gonna be something cool - something violent and sexual.

JASON

And who else ya got? You mentioned The General, right?

**KOOSH!** The Godly roar of a perfect STRIKE echoes from nearby. Darren looks to its source:

37 P.O.V. DARREN - CONTINUOUS

37

Chris bowls alone, walking away from his latest strike as the fallen pins are reset. The scoring monitor reads:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CHRIS	X	X	X	X	9-	X	X	X	9/	9 / X
	30	60	90	109	118	148	177	197	216	236

CHRIS looks up and sees Darren, nodding to him.

38 BACK TO SCENE - DAY

38

DARREN

(to Jason)

I did mention The General. You know Chris Jensen? He's on my team.

They wander down to Chris's lane. Chris approaches, meeting them halfway.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Funny seeing you here, with such a busy schedule.

CHRIS

You too. I figured you'd be analyzing game tape or something.

DARREN

You practicing for the team?

CHRIS

(chuckling dismissively)

You talk to The General yet?

JASON

That's what I said.

DARREN

Chris Jensen, meet Jason Christmas. Another great bowler who doesn't believe in my vision.

CHRIS

Another sucker who hasn't gotten fed up with this asshole yet?

Chris and Jason share a good laugh as they shake hands. Darren rolls his eyes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You know he made us show up to a pre-league mixer dressed like the Men in Black one year?

DARREN

It wasn't fuckin' *Men in Black*, Chris!  
(a humbled pause, to Jason:)  
It was obviously *Reservoir Dogs*.

JASON

(unfazed, to Chris)  
Nah, we just had a good night. I'm not sure if I want to go all-in on another league, though. Especially straight-up, no handicap.

DARREN

That's what makes Fall League so legit.

CHRIS

How about a game now?

JASON

Sure, I'll roll.

Jason and Chris head off towards the lane. Darren looks after them.

39 P.O.V. DARREN - DAY

39

They share another laugh as Jason hunts for a ball on the ball racks. Chris turns back to Darren.

CHRIS

How about you?

40 BACK TO SCENE - DAY

40

DARREN

Yeah...yeah, gimme one sec.

41 EXT. CIRCLE LANES - MOMENTS LATER

41

Darren trudges out of the front doors. Something weighs heavily on his mind. He withdraws his cell phone and finds a number. He pauses, inhales deeply, and finally presses the CALL BUTTON. He listens, vulnerability in his eyes.

DARREN

(into phone)

Hey...uh...it's Darren. I don't know how to ask you this, but...I'm putting a team together, and I think we're gonna be pretty good...with you. And even though I hate admitting it, we're probably kinda nothing without you. So, I know it's been a while since we rolled...and we got a lot of other shit to work out but...what can I say? I need you. I need The General. You can't tell me to fuck off and die if I don't ask first, right?

He's got no fight left, nothing more to say. He hangs up. He sadly pulls out a cigarette and lights it up, staring at nothing. He would deny it, but those are tears in his eyes.

After a couple of drags, his phone CHIRPS. He pulls it out and looks at the screen. Disbelief crosses his face.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Whoa.

42 INT. POSH OFFICE LOBBY - DAYTIME - DAYS LATER

42

Darren sits uncomfortably in a sleek, post-modern lobby. His hair is semi-combed and he wears khakis and a flannel shirt - his version of dressed-up. A slender female SECRETARY click-clacks towards him from down a hallway.

SECRETARY

Mister Shee-bonne?

She is saying that wrong, but he sighs and takes it, exhausted.

DARREN

Yeah.

SECRETARY

They're meeting is running long, but you're welcome to wait in the office if you'd like?

DARREN

Great, thank you.

43 INT. GORGEOUS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

43

Darren timidly enters the cavernous office, lots of black marble and right angles. A massive, monolithic desk sits in front of floor-to-ceiling windows, which frame a fantastic view of downtown Los Angeles.

Darren slowly walks across the wide-open floor, gravitating to an ornate LIQUOR CART. He pokes around a couple bottles, before pouring himself a FINGER of scotch, neat. He takes a SLUG from the bottle before delicately putting it back.

He walks to a COUCH, one of two that encircle a coffee table in the middle of the office. He sits and looks around, admiring and despising the cold, impersonal room.

From a side entrance behind Darren, a door swings open. Darren TENSES, sensing the PRESENCE of someone in the room. Powerful FOOTSTEPS clap on the floor as the person approaches.

Darren turns and looks to the person. His EYELINE follows as they circle him, stand in front of him, and sit on the opposing couch. Darren relaxes just enough to speak:

DARREN

You're doing better than I thought, General.

44 P.O.V. DARREN - DAY

44

On the couch, sitting confidently, with a self-satisfied smirk, sits THE GENERAL: MARY WILLERT-GREENSCHTAUFFEN. Her hair is pulled back into a slick, professional ponytail, and she wears a formal, fashionable ensemble.

MARY  
Tell me about Fall League.

**THE END**